

## Watertown City School District COVID-19 Educational Plan

The Watertown City School District has been actively working on providing equitable instruction to ALL students during this period of extended school closure. We know this is a stressful time for all. Putting an educational plan together when a district is not fully 1:1 with devices does not come without challenges. With over 4,000 students in the district, we have to consider how to reach every single one of them with the opportunities for instruction. Below is our three-phase plan and the challenges we are continually working through.

| Phase 1  | Phase 2   | Phase 3   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deployment of online learning resources and PK-12 instructional routines to the district Website.</li> <li>• Establish regular teacher interaction with students to provide emotional support and</li> <li>• Maintain connections. Can also help identify essential needs for families through this.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with staff to create individual course/subject <u>review-based</u> opportunities for students to work on at home. <i>No new instruction.</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish equitable methods of delivering virtual instruction to all students.</li> </ul>  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate needs of families to provide structure and opportunities to engage children.</li> <li>• Help families maintain a structured routine throughout the day.</li> <li>• Some students will be providing childcare to their younger siblings or others in the immediacy of the closure and will be unable to focus on school work.</li> <li>• Many families in the district will be focused on essential needs like food; the district spent much of the first week focused on getting its food service off the ground to meet the needs of all students within walking distance of their locations of residence.</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many teachers typically spend 3-5 weeks reviewing for the Regents exams in May/June. In order to avoid an equity gap in access to new instruction, we opted to flip-flop review and ask all teachers to design opportunities for students to work at home based on review of skills taught September through March.</li> <li>• Flexibility is still a must for many families - older siblings providing childcare, changing work circumstances, etc.</li> <li>• Should emphasize student choice (no direct teacher guidance available), critical thinking, creativity, and movement where possible.</li> <li>• Tasks should be flexible in time for completion as well - elementary should have shorter tasks, middle and high school either more but shorter tasks or fewer longer tasks that can be broken into parts over time.</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District is not currently 1:1.</li> <li>• Virtual instruction for primary-aged students requires parental support. District does not have a platform for this at this time. Must adopt one ASAP.</li> <li>• Not all families have reliable, continuous online access.</li> <li>• Synchronous instruction may not be possible for a variety of reasons. Ensure all students have access to recordings and regular teacher interaction for support</li> <li>• Special education accommodations and modifications need to be implemented to the extent possible via virtual instruction.</li> <li>• Professional development for staff on the use of Google Classroom for Grades 3-12.</li> <li>• Professional development for staff on selected platform for primary grades (K-2).</li> </ul> |

## **What Have We Done to Move Forward**

- Placed an order for additional Chromebooks for Kindergarten and Grade 1 students.
- Placed an order for hot spots to provide access to families without any (approximately 10% of our families do not have access).
- Requested a quote from SeeSaw as a platform for K-2; allows for asynchronous communication between a teacher and a child. Children can video/record learning demonstrations and share with teachers and teachers can share videos of instruction.
- Established office hours to provide support to teachers in Grades 3-12 in establishing a Google Classroom that would be ready to launch once all students have Chromebook devices.
- In development is a plan to distribute Chromebooks to all students in grades K-6, once we have them and are able to do so.

## **Other Questions and Challenges**

### **State Assessments**

All state assessments (3-8 ELA/Math, Grades 4 & 8 Science, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, New York State Alternative Assessment) have been suspended for the 2019-2020 school year.

### **Regents Exams**

We are awaiting guidance from NYSED on the administration and scoring of Regents exams. They are scheduled to occur as originally planned right now.

### **Graduation**

We are aware that a lot of districts are postponing their commencement ceremonies. We have not moved or canceled anything concerning graduation at this point. Regardless of what happens, Watertown City School District will celebrate our 2019-2020 graduates!

### **Grading**

At this time, the district is not grading work nor is it accepting hard copies of any work. Virtual work will receive feedback from teachers but no grades. Many districts across the state are not grading work at this time. Some have opted to discontinue grading at their 5-week period, others at March 16, when they stopped attending school, and still others are adopting a wait-and-see method in case the closures come to an end sooner rather than later. There is just no easy way to grade work right now without excluding students, and we can't do that, both philosophically or legally. If we were to grade based on March 16 or the 5-week mark, many students would not be successful, as students' averages are traditionally much lower at that point in the marking periods than they would be at the end of the quarter. We have a tentative plan to adjust the marking periods once we return to school to allow all students to complete work and have an equitable chance at passing courses, etc.

### **EDGE Courses**

We offer several EDGE courses at our high school. Each department at SUNY Jefferson handles things a bit differently. To provide equity to all of our students taking EDGE courses, we have asked SUNY Jefferson for guidance on this and are awaiting that. Our concern is that some students can easily move forward with online instruction while others cannot. We do have time for this, as EDGE courses continue through June.

**AP Courses**

On our website is guidance issued from The College Board about AP exams. Provided our teachers can assure that every single student in their class has access to their virtual instruction, we have allowed them to move forward with this so that students can challenge the exams as they wish this year.

**Special Education**

We are required to provide special education service to the extent possible. Accommodations and modifications, such as extended time, etc. will of course be included. Speech, OT, and other specialized services may be provided at this time via virtual delivery to the extent possible, but compensatory services are also being considered in the event of our return to school.

**Please note that these circumstances and the executive orders are always changing, and we are working to adapt plans to fit those constraints. We will keep you updated as we have more information on any topic as best we are able.**

**If you have questions, please do not hesitate to email the Watertown City School District administration.**